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ABSTRACT

This booklet is to facilitate the efforts of interested groups to determine the feasibility of introducing differentiated staffing. The guide begins with a definition of differentiated staffing, followed by a brief outline of the major factors involved in the concept: personnel, curriculum, community relations, equipment and materials, facilities, and decision making. Under each factor in turn are listed the numerous questions which should be considered in relation to the local situation. Also included is a list of suggested activities to support assessment. A bibliography provides a partial listing of the current literature on differentiated staffing. (MBM)

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WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS



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a guide for
**ASSESSING THE FEASIBILITY
OF DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING**

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS



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PREFACE

The idea of differentiated staffing seems to promise both a better learning environment for students and improvement of the teaching profession. But it should not be seen as a panacea for all the ills of education. It cannot make such difference without parallel action to reform curriculum, to use time and resources more flexibly and creatively, and to think more broadly about the educative process.

Differentiated staffing should not become merely something to copy because it is in vogue. The concept is too important and too complicated to be given "fad" status. Care should be taken also to assure that it is not exploited to serve any vested interest or ulterior motive.

This booklet raises many of the questions that need answers as educators experiment with differentiated staffing. Most important among the ideas included is involvement of all the people who will be directly affected by a basic change in school staffing patterns--teachers, students, parents, administration, teacher educators.

Wisconsin teachers are in the vanguard of pioneers in educational thought who are probing and encouraging the concept of differentiated staffing. They may lead the way to daring experimentation and benefit the nation if the ideas in this booklet are taken seriously.

Roy A. Edelfelt
Executive Secretary, NEA National
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INTRODUCTION

Professional publications of recent years have increasingly indicted the educational system which allows little, if any, responsible involvement in decision making by teachers, students, parents and other members of the community. Suggestions for school and staff reorganization indicate that a re-examination of the responsibilities for quality education should involve everyone concerned. The concept of differentiated staffing has been proposed as a framework for a redefinition of those responsibilities.

The implementation of differentiated staffing in any school or school system requires a three-phase program: study, assessment, and development. It needs to be said that this sequence of activity is absolutely necessary. One phase does not preclude another; nor is it possible to omit any part of one in order to speed the procedures.

The first phase--study--involves examining the philosophy, background, and rationale for and against differentiated staffing. The concept has been well documented as a means toward increased involvement in school policy making and increased teacher effectiveness. The bibliography following this guide is a partial listing of the current literature.

The uniqueness of each school district prevents the inclusion here of the third phase of implementation--task analysis and development of a differentiated staffing model.

It is the second phase--assessment--to which this booklet is directed. Its purpose is to facilitate the efforts of groups who have established an active interest in differentiated staffing; that is, to determine the feasibility of introducing such an arrangement. The guide begins with a definition of differentiated staffing, followed by a brief outline of the major factors involved in the concept. Under each factor in turn are listed the numerous questions which should be considered in relation to the local situation. Also included is a list of suggested activities to support assessment.

This booklet is a guide rather than prescription. However, the study committee must be aware of the time, money, and effort required for a thorough assessment. Also, at least some consideration should be given to each factor outlined even though certain questions listed under it may not be pertinent to the local situation.

By reaching this point your group has become involved in the study of differentiated staffing as a concept but is not yet committed to an in-depth assessment as it applies to your own educational system. Analyzing the factors which follow will determine the degree of that commitment. How will you start? Here are some suggestions:

1. Schedule a regular meeting time--a minimum of two hours is essential.
2. Use the "retreat" method for the purpose of uninterrupted study.
3. Try large and/or small groups classified by grade levels, areas of interest, and professional responsibilities.
4. Start with any factor or any question within a factor
5. Record each meeting of each group, on tape or in writing.
6. Try group dynamics techniques to free responses.
7. A round table encourages total group participation.
8. Pursue definitive answers to questions. Skip a question if agreement cannot be reached. Return to it later.

DEFINITION

Differentiated staffing is an arrangement for staffing schools which involves a greater variety of educational personnel than is common today. Under this arrangement, personnel are organized on the basis of such factors as commitment, talent, skill, training, experience, and individual interests. Within the professional teacher categories are various levels of responsibilities. A differentiated staff includes most of the following: teachers, administrators, aides, interns, student teachers, technicians, parents, community resource people, students, and volunteers.

Some major purposes of differentiated staffing are (a) to meet the individual needs and interests of the learners, (b) to provide advancement within the teacher categories, and (c) to involve more people in the decision-making process, particularly in the areas of curriculum and instruction.

FACTORS

Priorities have not been implied in listing the following factors. They are so interrelated that the editors found it too big a problem to establish a rank order. The factors identified here may not be the only major areas your group will want to examine in its assessment of differentiated staffing. Also, the particular situation may raise additional questions which were not considered by the editors.

Personnel

A differentiated staffing arrangement will affect all persons involved in the educational system: teachers, students, administrators, school board members, and members of the community. It will also influence educational agencies: teacher preparation institutions, the State Department of Public Instruction, any other certification agency, and the local, state, and national education associations. In turn these publics will affect differentiated staffing.

Curriculum

In a differentiated staffing arrangement many people will be involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of a curriculum to facilitate the learning process of each student.

Community Relations

Every segment of the community will be involved in the development and evaluation of a differentiated staffing arrangement. The community will be a source for paraprofessionals, a facility for expanding the learning environment, a sounding board for cooperative activities, and a source of ideas on revising educational objectives.

Equipment and Materials

A differentiated staffing arrangement assumes an adequate supply and optimum use of a variety of equipment and materials to facilitate learning. It may provide for greater and more effective use of what is now available. Some additional equipment and materials may be needed.

Facilities

A differentiated staffing arrangement will be affected by the facilities. Present facilities may have potential for establishing grouping patterns to meet individual needs. Cost will be a factor in determining the possibility of developing a new staffing pattern within existing limitations, changing present facilities, or constructing new buildings.

Decision Making

In a differentiated staffing arrangement, a large number of people will be involved in responsible decision making. Traditionally, decision making has been assigned to the school board, administrators, and, to a lesser extent, teachers. The range of people involved may expand to include students, community action groups, and other interested citizens. Teachers will have increased authority in the decision making process.

ANALYSIS OF FACTORS

Personnel

- I. A differentiated staffing arrangement will affect teachers.

A. Interpersonal relationships

1. How will a climate be established that will allow for open exchange of ideas and opinions?
2. How will the staff plan together?
3. How will the necessary time be provided for planning?
4. How will the staff learn to work comfortably in each other's presence? What kind of assistance will they need?
5. How will observing colleagues provide for teacher growth?

B. Roles and responsibilities

1. How will job responsibilities be determined?
2. How will the staff be selected to carry out these responsibilities?
3. How can the staff be helped to adjust to the new roles established?
4. How will ongoing staff evaluation be conducted?

C. Preservice training

1. How much will the staff be involved in the training of student teachers?
2. How will the role of the cooperating teacher change?
3. Who will determine the kinds of experiences the student teachers will have?

D. In-service education

1. What objectives will be established for the in-service program?
2. Who will determine these objectives?
3. How much time will be available to

- carry out the in-service program?
4. Who will determine when the in-service program will be held?

II. A differentiated staffing arrangement will affect students.

A. Interpersonal relationships

1. How will differentiated staffing affect the student self-image?
2. What opportunities will there be for students to develop responsibility and leadership?
3. What opportunities will there be for students to work cooperatively together?
4. How will older students be allowed to work with younger children?

B. Teacher-pupil relationships

1. How will differentiated staffing assure that individual student needs and interests are met?
2. What evaluation procedures can be used to determine if student needs and interests are being met?
3. How will contact with more adults affect the students?
4. Who will determine which students will participate? What criteria will be used?
5. Who will be involved in grouping students?
6. What criteria will be used to determine these groups?
7. How will open communication be established among special service personnel, classroom teachers, and students to provide for better understanding of the total child?

III. A differentiated staffing arrangement will affect administrators.

A. Interpersonal relationships

1. How will the role of the administrator change?
2. How will administrative responsibilities be determined?
3. Who will determine these responsibilities?
4. How will these new roles and responsibilities affect the college and in-service preparation of administrators?
5. How can the administrators be helped to adjust to their new roles?
6. How will ongoing evaluation of administrators be conducted?
7. How will open communication be established among students, teachers and administrators?

IV. A differentiated staffing arrangement will affect the school board.

A. Teacher/board relationships

1. How will open communication be maintained between teachers and the school board relative to changes in curriculum and instructions?
2. How will teacher negotiations be affected?
3. What will be the role of the local association regarding professional rights and responsibilities, teacher welfare, and salaries?
4. How will salary commensurate to job responsibilities be determined?
5. Who will determine this?

B. Administrator/board relationships

1. How will salary commensurate to job responsibility be determined?
2. Who will determine this?
3. What will be the role of the school board in decision making relative to financial patterns, staff selection, and goals of the school?

A differentiated staffing arrangement will affect the community.

A. School/community relationships

1. How will the community be involved in planning, initiating, and evaluating this program?
2. Who will represent the community?
3. How will this program be communicated to the public at large?
4. Who will be involved in this public relations program?

Curriculum

I. In a differentiated staffing arrangement many people will be involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum.

A. Present curriculum

1. In what form is the present curriculum --formal or informal?
2. Who is involved in curriculum development within the present structure?
3. How well does the established curriculum reflect the school philosophy?
4. To what degree are teachers following the established curriculum?
5. How well does this curriculum meet the needs of the students?
6. What problems have been identified as a result of this evaluation?

B. Process of planning curriculum

1. What will be considered in developing a curriculum--students, money, facilities, time, resources, personnel, research, evaluation?
2. What criteria will be used for evaluating this curriculum?
3. Who will be responsible for evaluating the curriculum?
4. What staff responsibilities are necessary for implementing this curriculum?

Community Relations

- I. Every segment of the community will be involved in the development and evaluation of a differentiated staffing arrangement.

- A. Segments of the community

1. How will participating community groups be identified (civic, business, clergy, senior citizens, news media, parents, school personnel, teacher preparation institutions, PTA, school board)?
2. Who will select representatives of these groups?

- B. Interaction of these publics

1. Will a differentiated staffing study committee be created?
2. If so, what will be its function?
3. Will the group hold public hearings?
4. How will segments of the community be involved in pre- and post - hearings study?
5. Will there be small-group reaction meetings?
6. How will the information gained from these meetings be used?
7. How will local radio, TV and newspapers be used?
8. How will student participation be assured?
9. What will be the function of the local education association(s)?

- C. Nature of the community involvement

1. How will the study committee be involved in school visitation?
2. How will the committee's participation in differentiated staffing conferences and workshops be assured?
3. Who will gather the necessary data from studies and research on differentiated staffing?

4. How and to whom will this information be disseminated?
5. Will the decisions of this study committee be advisory only?
6. Who will determine this?

D. New career opportunities

1. Will there be employment opportunities for members of the community with the establishment of differentiated staffing?
2. How will the talents of community members be identified and used?
3. How will retirees be utilized?
4. How will professional resources in the community be used?

Equipment and Materials

- I. A differentiated staffing arrangement assumes an adequate supply and optimum use of equipment and materials.

A. Supply of equipment materials

1. How will the effectiveness of present equipment and materials be evaluated?
2. Who will determine what new equipment and materials are needed?
3. What criteria will be used in their selection?
4. Will new technological devices be considered?
5. How will the necessary moneys for new equipment and materials be obtained?

B. Use of equipment and materials

1. How will easy access to equipment and materials be assured?
2. How will staff be trained in the operation of equipment?
3. Who will be responsible for maintaining equipment and materials?
4. Who will evaluate their effectiveness?
5. On what criteria?

Facilities

- I. A differentiated staffing arrangement will be affected by the facilities.

A. Design of facilities

1. Will it be necessary to modify existing buildings for needed flexibility?
2. If so, how should the buildings be re-designed?
3. Will additions to existing buildings provide the needed flexibility?
4. Will it be necessary to construct new facilities?
5. If so, what design will be most appropriate?
6. Will it be beneficial to lease suitable buildings to attain the needed flexibility?
7. Who will be involved in making these decisions?

B. Cost of facilities

1. Will the community be able to finance a building program?
2. Will the community be willing to support a building program?
3. If not, what methods will be used to gain such support?

Decision-Making

A larger number of people will be involved in responsible decision-making in a differentiated staffing arrangement.

Questions pertaining to the area of decision-making have been listed under the previous headings. Therefore, a cross-reference is included here to provide another dimension to your assessment.

Decision-Making Grid

The notations (II.A, III.C, etc.) used in the grid found on page 16 refer to questions listed under the previous five major factor headings: Personnel, Curriculum, Community Relations, Equipment and materials, and Facilities. For example, questions involving students in the decision-making process as related to personnel matters will be found in the outline as items II.A and II.B under the factor heading "Personnel."

DECISION-MAKING GRID

FACTOR	Students	Staff	Administrators	School Board	Community	Education Associations	Teacher Preparation Institutions	Governmental and Private Agencies
Personnel	II.A	I.A	III.A	IV.A	V.A	I.A	I.C	I.D
	II.B	I.B		IV.B		I.B	I.D	V.A
		I.C				I.C	III.A	
		I.D				I.D		
						IV.A		
						V.A		
Curriculum	I.A	I.A	I.A	I.B	I.B	I.A	I.B	I.B
	I.B	I.B	I.B			I.B		
Community Relations	I.A	V.A	I.A	I.A	I.A	I.A	I.A	I.B
	I.B		I.B	I.B	I.B	I.B	I.C	I.C
			I.C	I.C	I.C	I.C	I.D	I.D
			I.D	I.D	I.D	I.D		
Equipment and Materials	I.A	I.A	I.A				I.A	I.A
		I.B	I.B					
Facilities	I.A	I.B	I.A	I.A	I.B	I.B	I.A	I.A
				I.B				I.B

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

The following activities may be helpful in meeting the problems you are likely to encounter while assessing the feasibility of differentiated staffing for your school or school system. Consider:

- . visiting schools with established differentiated staffing patterns.
- . participating in local, state and national conferences and workshops, giving priority to the differentiated staffing study committee.
- . using mass media to disseminate information to the community.
- . presenting the concept of differentiated staffing to PTA's and community organizations by panel discussions, audiovisual techniques, and brochures.
- . educating school staff members through in-service workshops.
- . involving group dynamics techniques to improve committee efficiency.
- . seeking released time for committee meetings study.
- . seeking reduced teacher load to provide teachers with time for study and meetings.
- . establishing incentives to encourage retraining for differentiated staff responsibilities.
- . seeking funds from foundations and local industries for study and pilot projects.
- . exchanging teachers with a school already organized on a differentiated staffing pattern.
- . clarifying and defining terms to avoid confusion and misunderstandings.

- . evaluating the reaction of the community to the program.
- . involving all segments of the community by means of "coffee parties."
- . involving students through surveys, committee work, opinion polls on school changes.
- . reading and discussing publications related to differentiated staffing.
- . including representatives of higher education institutions in planning sessions.
- . involving representatives of educational organizations.
- . promoting a unified study group rather than fragmented efforts.
- . involving teacher associations and the school board in negotiating time to study, assess, and develop differentiated staffing.
- . requesting financial or professional assistance, as appropriate, from the U. S. Office of Education, the State Department of Public Instruction, NEA National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, and Institute for Development of Educational Activities.

CONCLUSION

You have now studied differentiated staffing in relation to the needs of your own school or district and have had to define your own problems and seek unique solutions. If you have found it feasible to develop a differentiated staffing model, whether or not it is a generally accepted pattern, the following conditions are essential:

1. Differentiation in role responsibilities.
2. Differentiation in the type and amount of preparation required for each role and subsequent differentiation in certification.
3. Differentiation in professional responsibilities, including working hours.
4. Differentiation in salaries based upon roles, responsibilities, and performance.

By studying differentiated staffing you have indicated a willingness to be responsible for a rational, rather than compulsive, change in the structure and quality of education in your school district. We congratulate you and wish you well.

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